protecting and providing a stimulus to the MSMEs which, *inter alia*, include: (i) extending the loan limit under Credit Guarantee Scheme from Rs. 50 lakh to Rs. 1 crore with a guarantee cover of 50 per cent; (ii) increasing the guarantee cover under Credit Guarantee Scheme from 80 per cent to 85 per cent for credit facility up to Rs. 5 lakh; (iii) interest subvention of 2 per cent in pre and post-shipment export credit to small and medium enterprises (SME) sector; (iv) refinance limit of Rs. 7,000 crore to Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) for incremental on-lending to the micro and small enterprises (MSE) sector; (v) grant of need-based ad hoc working capital demand loans up to 20 per cent of the existing fund-based limits; and (vi) reduction in interest rates for borrowing by micro enterprises by 1 per cent and in respect of SMEs by 0.5 per cent. These policy measures/initiatives and thrust on augmenting credit delivery to the sector have resulted in increasing the outstanding credit to micro and small enterprises (MSE) sector from the Public Sector Banks from Rs. 1,51,137 crore as at the end of March 2008 to Rs. 1,91,307 crore as at the end of March, 2009 (latest available).

For the promotion and development of MSMEs and to enhance their competitiveness, the Government is laying thrust on the implementation of ongoing schemes/programmes, which include National Manufacturing Competitiveness Programme, Credit Guarantee Scheme, Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme, Performance and Credit Rating Scheme, Cluster Development Programme, Prime Minister's Employment Generation programme and Market Development Assistance Scheme. In addition, a special fund of Rs. 4,000 crore has been provided to SIDBI to incentivise Banks and State Financial Corporations (SFCs) to lend to MSEs and to facilitate the flow of credit at reasonable rates to the sector. Further, a High Level Task Force under the chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister has been constituted to address the issues of MSME sector.

Agrarian Crisis in India

*132. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware of the views of globally famed Agriculture Scientist Professor M.S. Swaminathan expressed during April, 2009, while releasing the book 'Agrarian Crisis in India', relating to 100 million plus small farms, comparing Government's agrarian crisis solving approach as "blind men feeling an elephant"; and

(b) if so, whether Government will be concentrating on "differentiation between the problems of farming and those of the farmers", to achieve more than 4 per cent annual growth in agriculture?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) As per a news item appearing in the web edition of the Hindustan Times dated 7th April, 2009, Prof. M.S. Swaminathan has reportedly made such remarks while releasing the book titled 'Agrarian crisis in India'.

(b) Agriculture is a State subject and all necessary initiatives continue to be taken by the State Governments. However, the Government of India has been supplementing the efforts of the State Governments in this regard and has always laid great emphasis on solving the problems of the farmers. In fact, the National Agricultural Policy, 2000 has been replaced with National Policy for Farmers (NPF), 2007 to give centrality to farmers and to ensure that human dimension must be the principal determinant of agricultural policies. It may be specifically mentioned here that the National Commission on Farmers (NCF), set up under the Chairmanship of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, submitted a revised draft National Policy for Farmers along with its fifth and final Report in October, 2006 incorporating its main recommendations. The NPF, 2007 is based on the said revised draft NPF submitted by the NCF.

The NPF, 2007 mentions about the need to focus more on the economic well-being of the farmers, rather than just on production. Accordingly, the first major goal of the NPF 2007 is to improve economic viability of farming by substantially increasing the net income of farmers and to ensure that agricultural progress is measured by advances made in this income.

A plan of action for operationalisation of NPF 2007 has been drawn and a monitoring mechanism put in place to oversee the progress of the implementation of the provisions contained in NPF. This along with an array of other initiatives by Government like substantial increase in the minimum support prices of important agricultural crops, Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, National Food Security Mission, National Horticulture Mission, setting up of National Rainfed Area Authority, Micro Irrigation, Agriculture Technology Management Agency Scheme, National Agricultural Insurance Scheme, Comprehensive Credit Package, Debt Waiver Scheme, Revival of Cooperative Credit Institutions, Technology Mission on Oilseeds and Pulses, etc. will ensure that not only the 4 per cent annual growth in agriculture is achieved but it also results in substantial improvement in socio-economic well-being of the farmers.

Endangered Indian Languages

*133. SHRIMATI JAYANTHI NATARAJAN:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (2009), India now leads the World by being home to a whopping 196 endangered languages;

(b) if so, whether a two day international seminar was held at New Delhi to discuss how to save these languages; and

(c) if so, the details of discussions held in the seminar and steps taken by Government to protect the Indian languages from dying?